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ABSTRACT

A study examined the effects of daily journal writing on kindergarten children's phonics acquisition. At St. Joseph School in Carteret, New Jersey, 21 kindergartners kept daily journals in addition to normal classroom instruction over a period of 4 months, while the 20 kindergartners in another class received only the normal classroom phonics instruction. Students were grouped heterogeneously. The curriculum, pace and methods of instruction were the same for both classes. At the end of that time, both samples were tested in phonemic awareness of consonants and letter-sound correspondence; results were compared and analyzed. Findings suggest that no significant difference was found between daily journal writing and phonics skill acquisition in kindergarten children. The failure to find a significant relationship between daily journal writing and phonics skills in kindergartners suggests that more research needs to be done to determine the effects, if any, of journal writing on other areas of achievement. (Contains related research and 37 references; test scores are appended.) (Author/CR)

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ED 417 408

Daily Journal Writing and Its Influence on Phonics Development in Kindergarten

by

Jean B. Piccirillo

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Master of Arts Degree

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ABSTRACT

In the present study, the effect of daily journal writing on kindergarten children's phonics acquisition was examined. Twenty-one kindergartners kept daily journals in addition to normal classroom instruction over a period of four months, while the twenty kindergartners in another class received only the normal class instruction. At the end of that time, both samples were tested in phonemic awareness of consonants and letter-sound correspondence; results were compared and analyzed. No significant difference was found between daily journal writing and phonics skill acquisition in kindergarten children.

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Reading instruction has been a focus of attention and debate for many years. Most recently, there has been a tug-of-war between whole language proponents and traditional instruction. While there are benefits and drawbacks to all of the approaches to teaching reading, studies are showing that writing is an important component of the reading program.

The relationship between reading and writing is interdependent. Marilyn Adams' analysis of several models of the reading process, including Rummelhardt's Parallel Distributed Processing Model, concludes that just as the phonological processor is responsible for processing individual sound units, so is the orthographic processor responsible for processing the visual aspects of reading. She goes on to say that both processors work back and forth to construct meaning. The interaction of these two processors along with the meaning processor, is the key to successful comprehension.

> "For the young or uncertain readers, the potential combination of writing to reading run much deeper than any concern of form or style. In particular, as children become authors, as they struggle to express, refine, and reach audiences through their own writing, they actively come to grips with the most important insights of all."(p.405) (Adams, 1994)

Alphabets, as well as all writing systems, are transcriptions of conversations (McGuiness, McGuiness Donahue, 1995). If the purpose of written language is to record spoken language, conversely, it follows then, that the purpose of reading is to recreate

the conversation. "Through writing, children learn that text is not preordained or immutable truth. It is human voice." (Adams, 1994, p. 405)

In a simplification of the developmental progress of language, information was passed down by means of stories or legends, told from one generation to the next. As time went on, there was more and more to remember, so writing was established as a way to keep the stories. In order to access that information, one had to know the code to understand what the symbols meant in order to read the story. "Through writing, children learn that the purpose of text is not to be read but to be understood."(Adams, 1994, p. 405)

"Many similarities exist between reading and writing. Both are composing processes, in which meaning is constructed." (Burns, Roe, Ross, 1992) Both require the knowledge of written language's code which, in the case of English, is a grapheme-phoneme correspondence- a letter/sound relationship.

The understanding of how print maps onto speech, that spoken words can be broken down into individual sounds, that letters within words stand for sounds, and that individual sounds blend together to create words, is called the *Alphabetic Principle* (Spector, 1995). At the beginning of kindergarten, children may be functioning at a prephonetic stage, without knowledge of this principle, using letters without concern for the sounds they represent. As they begin to develop a sense of letter/sound relationships, they use invented spellings.

Richgels defines invented spellings as "beginning writers' ability to write words by attending to their sound units and associating letters with them in a systematic , though unconventional, way" (Richgels, 1987) "Writing with invented spellings enables children to apply their knowledge of letter-sound relationships for their own purpose." (Burns, et al, 1992, p77) Invented spelling also allows the instructor to gain insight into the writer's understanding of letter/sound relationships.

Burns, et al, state further that "knowledge of which letters represent certain sounds within words is useful not only for writing but also for decoding words in reading" (p78). Additionally, the process of writing is critical in the early stages of reading because writing helps children establish visual scanning and memory strategies that reading requires (Clay, 1975). Writing, therefore, would seem beneficial to the process of reading, especially in the beginning stages.

Roach Van Allen, associated with the Language Experience Approach to reading, feels that writing is an important component of reading. The philosophy of the Language Experience Approach is based on the concept of:

What I can think about, I can talk about
What I can say, I can write,
What I can write, I can read.

In this method of reading instruction, the child's own writing actually becomes the materials for his reading instruction.

Assuming this is so, that writing enhances reading instruction and learning, phonics acquisition would be improved by frequent

writing opportunities. It would appear that daily journal keeping could make a difference in the acquisition of early phonics skills.

Hypothesis

To provide evidence on this topic, the following study was undertaken. It was hypothesized that kindergartners who keep daily journals will demonstrate a stronger knowledge of phonics skills than those who do not keep daily journals.

Procedures

Subjects

Subjects for this study consist of 41 kindergarten students in St. Joseph School in Carteret, New Jersey. Kindergarten One, identified as the experimental sample, is comprised of ten girls and eleven boys who were between the ages of five and six years old during the time of this study. Kindergarten Two, identified as the control sample, includes 12 boys and 8 girls, also between the ages of five and six.

Students from both classes had similar abilities upon entrance to kindergarten, as evidenced by their pre-school experience, and were grouped heterogeneously. The curriculum, pace and methods of instruction were the same for both classes.

Instrument

In order to compare the phonetic abilities of the two groups, the subjects were administered test one and test two of the

Metropolitan Readiness Tests, which address beginning consonants, and letter-sound correspondence, respectively. In the first test, students were asked to listen to a word for each row, and to respond by coloring in the circle under the picture of the item which begins with the same sound. This tested phonemic awareness.

The second test, on letter-sound correspondence, shows a picture at the beginning of each row, and asks the subject to listen to the beginning sound of the word, as it is read by the administrator, and to respond by coloring the circle under the letter that has that sound.

Procedure

Prior to testing, Kindergarten One, the experimental sample, in addition to normal classroom instruction, was asked to write one journal page a day, beginning in October and continuing through the assessment period. During the first two weeks, the teacher modeled the journal entry process, composing a class journal entry each day, describing her thoughts and writing process as she worked. On the third week, students began to write their own pages. Periodically, children were asked to tell about their entries, and their dictation was written in conventional print by the teacher. The teacher continued to compose a class journal entry about once a week in order to model and encourage exploration of the alphabetic principle. Children were able to choose their own topics and could work together, offering encouragement or advice to each other.

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Kindergarten Two, the control sample, received only normal classroom phonics instruction which was part of their basal prereading program, and no additional writing activities.

Each kindergarten was tested separately, in February, by the same tester, in one session. Tests were administered to the subjects in their own classrooms. Children were spread out so that copying would be impossible, improving reliability of results.

Results

There were 18 subjects in the control sample and 20 subjects in the experimental sample who were present for testing. Responses to both tests were scored in terms of the number of correct items, generating a raw score from which the means and standard deviation were calculated. As shown in Table I for test one, the control sample mean score was 8.83, with a standard deviation of 3.3, while the experimental sample, on the phonemic awareness of consonants, had a mean of 9.45 and standard deviation of 2.04.

Table I

Test I
Phonemic Awareness of Consonants

Sample	M	SD	t
Control	8.83	3.31	-.70
Experimental	9.45	2.04	

NS

There was no significant difference (t = -.70) between the means of the control and experimental samples.

A similar result was noted in Table II, test two, letter-sound correspondence, where the control sample's mean was 11.37, with a standard deviation of 4.57.

Table II

Test II
Letter-Sound Correspondence

Sample	M	SD	t
Control	11.37	4.57	-1.20
Experimental	12.95	3.61	

NS

The experimental sample's mean was 12.95, with a standard deviation of 3.61. Once again, while the difference was greater (t = 1.20) than that shown in Table I, it was not large enough to be considered significant.

Conclusions

Results indicate that the hypothesis, that kindergartners who keep daily journals would demonstrate a stronger knowledge of phonics skills than those who do not keep daily journals, must be rejected. While there was a slightly higher score on the letter-sound correspondence test, although not enough to be of significance, it may be that, if the study was continued over a longer period than this study's five months, the t would become significant. Castle, Riach and Nicholson (1994) found that children who use letter-sound correspondences, as in invented spelling, had a better start in reading, a finding that may not become evident until first grade and more formal reading instruction.

This study did find several concurrences with previous journal studies, however. The first is that, in agreement with Wells (1993), teachers may gain valuable insights into how the students learn and think. A majority of the journals gave evidence of the development of phonics use, beginning with initial sounds, then final sounds, and, finally, medial sounds. In most cases only consonants were used to form words, confirming the findings of Allen et. al. (1989).

Although they were at various stages at the conclusion of the study, the subjects of this study exhibited the six stages of development noted by Hipple (1985), and in the same sequence. All students began with *nonwriting* (pictures only), some progressed to *scribbling*, while others went directly to *random lettering* (xpvtxcv) . *Labeling* was, and continued to be, a favorite mode of writing, (i.e.: "army men", "rainbow", "bunkbeds"), usually in conjunction

with invented spelling. *Listing* names of classmates for various purposes, such as anticipated birthday party guest lists, took precedent for some time, and all but several children were able to use *invented spellings* to express themselves. Two students began to make the move to *transitional spelling* during the monitored period .

Repetition, for many subjects, seemed to be very important. Kintisch (1986) notes this in the prekindergarten and kindergarten stages. One child drew tornadoes for a month, labeled "trndo", while another drew several weeks worth of monster trucks, and yet another, two weeks of rainbows. Around Halloween, there were haunted houses ("hntd has") galore.

- The failure to find a significant relationship between daily journal writing and phonics skills in kindergartners, suggests that more research needs to be done to determine the effects of journal writing, if any, on other areas of achievement.

RELATED RESEARCH

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In order to understand the suggested relationship between phonics and writing, specifically journal writing, the process of learning to read and the process of writing must be analyzed.

As has been the case with this study, Martha Zacharias (1991), in her study, noted that "little was found in the way of actual research but much was located in the way of authoritative statements from educational practitioners." (p 265) Zacharias examined various reports by these educational practitioners on the relationship between journal writing and the thinking processes. These processes include: comparing, summarizing, observing, classifying, interpreting, criticizing and looking for assumptions, imagining, collecting and organizing data, hypothesizing, applying facts and principles in new situations, and decision making. The practitioners agree that all of these may be addressed through the use of learning logs and response journals, especially in the content areas. The consensus among researchers, is that journal writing can address all these processes and that "journal writing lends itself well to the development of thinking operations."(p 265)

Julie Wollman-Bonilla (1989) agrees that this is so. She has spent many years working with journals in her classroom and is convinced that journals are beneficial to student's developing understanding of their learning. Journal writing aids children in their understanding of texts because it involves personal engagement in reading. She agrees that writing can be a tool for learning and thinking. Following case studies of three children in her class using dialogue journals, Wollman-Bomilla observed that all three children grew in confidence as evidenced by their increased participation in

class discussion, and their motivation to read. An additional benefit was that "their writing helped [her] to know what the children understood, how they were learning, and how they approached reading."(p 118)

Even at an early pre-reading level there seems to be a strong relationship between written language and reading. The importance of the purposes of print is suggested in a study by Huba, Robinson and Kontos (1989) to evaluate the relationship between the concepts for the reasons for print and success in reading acquisition in preschoolers. They hypothesized that children who had a better understanding of the purposes of print would score higher on comprehension tests in early elementary school. Subjects chosen were from the previous study who still lived in the area. The Print Awareness Test and the comprehension form of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills were administered. Results showed that the awareness of the purposes of print was a good indicator as to how students would perform several years later.

This connection of reading and writing is further explored by Wollman-Bonilla (1995), in conjunction with Barbara Werchadlo in an "exploration of literature response journals" (p 562) in a first grade classroom. Ms. Werchadlo was concerned that there were not systematic descriptions of grades lower than third using literature response journals. Believing that first graders could benefit from them, she set out to explore the results in her classroom. Since the study included only the one classroom of 20 children, all Anglo, from working and middle class families, results were somewhat limited. Individual response patterns are discussed and categorized,

allowing for some overlapping. While the results were largely positive, there were concerns about the influence of the teacher's comments on the student's topic choices. Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo concluded that first graders do, indeed, respond to literature in written form and that "there is considerable interdependence among reading, writing, discussion, and thinking in the response processes of first graders." (p 569) This was especially evident with the children who rarely spoke in class, whose thinking was not readily observed through class discussion.

Wells (1993) confirms the premise that journals provide the teacher with insight into how the students think. She set out to study the dialogue journals in her Reading Workshop and to categorize them in order to gain an understanding of "how dialogue journals promote reading development. [She also] wanted to better define, through categorization, just how audience affected letter writing." (p 295) The students involved were 26 avid to reluctant readers. Students were required to write at least once a week to the teacher and once a week to another student and to answer all letters addressed to them. Eventually eight students were selected who represented a range of abilities to continue the year long study. Responses fell into five categories: *ongoing business, summaries, metacognitive responses, connections*, and *evaluation of text and author. Ongoing business* involved writings which were part of a larger text. *Summaries* included retelling and abstracts, while *metacognitive responses* dealt with the student's awareness of their reading process. *Connections* made connections or identification with characters or situations about which they read. In *evaluation of*

text and author, subjects offered opinions about these aspects of reading.

As a result of this categorization, Wells was able to hypothesize how reading development takes place. In the beginning, students' comments reflected class instruction. In the second stage, they expanded upon their original thoughts. Third, questions asked by teachers, through their responses, became models for the students' questions. Fourth, students' tailored their journals to meet their own individual needs. Finally, journal writing was not found to aid all students equally well.

When sorting the responses by audience,the second finding was that "a) students are far more likely to recommend books to one another than to teachers and b) students write more abstracts for one another than they do for teachers."(p 300)

Wells concludes that the metacognitive responses are important to the reading process because it shows evidence that they are aware of their own monitoring behaviors.

Since the Language Experience Approach to reading involves reading and writing in conjunction, the following study is of interest to ours. Kendrick and Bennett (1966) undertook a study comparing two methods of teaching language arts: Experience Approach and Traditional. Twenty-seven teachers from each instructional style participated, including about 750 pupils. Following in-service training, pupils were tested to determine effectiveness of the two approaches. Within this study, four components of language arts instruction were measured separately: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Although, according to the

table of results, the Traditional Method "appeared more effective for the skill of deriving meaning from the written paragraph for males of all socio-economic levels and for middle class females"(p 111), subjects in the Language Experience Approach had a positive effect on both males and females in writing as evidenced by the high total number of words written. It would appear, from these results, that at least children who are taught in the Language Experience Approach are more comfortable expressing themselves in writing than students taught with the Traditional Method. Kendrick and Bennett conclude that each instructional method produced a particular kind of effect. They suggest that that which produced the desirable effects be identified and perhaps fused into a new and more effective system.

Bromley (1989) addresses this challenge, stating that " both research and theory support the notion that combining instruction in reading and writing in the classroom enhances children's literacy learning." (p 122) There are three major reasons for this connection. First, there is simultaneous development between reading and writing. Secondly, they reinforce each other. Third, the purpose of writing is to communicate, just as it is through speaking and reading. Bromley deals with a type of journal called a "buddy journal" which is a type of dialogue journal between two students. She feels that by encouraging children to write more, they will gain benefit from the reading/ writing interaction. Considerable time is spent examining procedures for this activity and not much time describing the results. The project took place over a two week period in a third grade classroom. At the end of this time, the students were polled as to

their interest in writing in this method. Results were positive and, since a purpose was to encourage student writing, the project was successful.

Stotsky (1983) set out to examine all available research in reading and writing relationships and to synthesize them. The following categories were found: correlational studies, studies examining the influence of writing on reading, and studies examining the influence of reading on writing. Of the studies of the influence of writing on reading, which are of particular interest to this current study, there are two sub categories: " those attempting to improve writing through writing instruction, with effects on reading, and those attempting to improve reading through the use of writing".(p 631)

In the first subcategory, studies mostly involved note taking activities and their influence on comprehension, finding that comprehension improves with the organizational skills that note taking involves. (This corroborates with the findings of Zacharias that journal writing "assists the development of the thinking processes." (Zacharias, 1991, p 269)

In the second subcategory , a study by Oehlkers (1971) examined a year long creative writing program and it's effect on a word recognition test. The two groups tested were a Language Experience Approach class and creative writing program students. No significant difference was found between the two at the year's end.

Though none of the studies examined involved journal keeping directly, the subcategory addressing note taking is most

applicable since journals writing, especially on a kindergarten level, involve using information learned about words, practicing and clarifying this information in the same way taking notes uses and clarifies alphabetic information learned.

Stotsky concludes that the studies show that better writers tend to be better readers and that "almost all studies that used writing activities or exercises specifically to improve reading comprehension or retention of information in instructional material found significant gains." (p 636)

Dobson (1989) , in a study of children's development through kindergarten and first grade, seeks to make a the connection between reading and writing by observing writing and reading strategies at the same points in time. The eighteen subjects were chosen from a resource room and sampling was done on a regular basis over the two year time period showing five levels of progression:

Level 1- understanding that the contents of a book are meaningful and can be read

Level 2- understanding that spoken text matches written text

Level 3- awareness that the alphabetic principle is used to match speech and print

Level 4- knows words appear on page as separate units separated by space

Level 5- understands that morphemes have constant spelling and can be combined to form new units

Dobson noted that " the alphabetic strategy appeared in the children's writing and their reading of that writing three to nine months before it appeared in storybook reading."(p 90) This delay was apparent throughout the samples. " Because writers control the print, they seek out and pay attention to information purposeful to its production." (p 98) As children's spellings became more conventional, it was closer to storybook print, thereby making the transfer of identification of words in another context.

Mason, Peterman, Powell and Kerr (1989), undertook a study which looked at the effects of different kinds of books: narrative, expository and a little book (a very short, picturebook with a single, simple statement on each page)- on kindergarten children, as evidenced by their ability to read, write about and recall information about each of the three kinds of books. One hundred and thirty-six kindergartners in six classrooms participated. Responses were categorized, given a point value, and ranked. Mason et al felt that this would indicate to what extent reading and writing about a book were related to each other. Substantial differences were found in the responses to the three books. Results showed that the little book was easier for the children to read than the narrative and expository texts and that the number of meaning units recalled were higher for the narrative and expository. Moderate correlations were found between the reading and writing responses for narrative and expository texts, whereas coorelations between reading and writing was poor with the little book. Most note worthy was that the levels of writing did not change with book type, only the content of the writing changed. Mason, et al, suggest

that " writing attempts and talk about that writing are less affected by teacher's book reading than are reading attempts when children are just becoming literate. At that time, writing may affect reading, but reading and book listening do not affect writing." (p 118)

In one, of a compilation of three of her studies, Ehri (1989) presents evidence that writing draws student's attention to sounds in the words and attention to the letters that might make those sounds. To accomplish this, kindergarten children were separated into three groups: *prereaders, novices*, and *veterans* according to their reading abilities. Each subject was given two lists of words, one visually distinct but not phonetical, and the other phonetic in nature. Results showed that the veterans and novices learned the words from the phonetic list more easily than the visual one and that the prereaders learned to read the visual ones more easily, leading to the conclusion that prereaders rely on visual clues whereas very early readers use phonetic ones. In order to select subjects, they were tested for their letter and letter-sound knowledge. This knowledge correlates with the ability to learn isolated words. This concurs with a previous study which indicates that alphabet knowledge is one of the best predictors of reading achievement.

Mason and Stewart (1989) looked at prekindergarteners in a study which addresses their awareness of print, letter sound and learning to read and write. The school in the study believed in teaching formal reading instruction to prekindergarten children. Two of the prekindergarten classes participated. While both classes were given additional writing experiences, one class was given the additional task of discussing

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and reading picture-phrase books. Data was gathered from tests, interviews and questionnaires to parents. There was no significant change in the children's awareness of learning to read and write but there was evidence of improvement in their understanding of letter sounds. Progress in writing was notably lower than that in reading. Relating reading to writing awareness, there was moderate correlation, indicating that reading and writing awareness develop together.

Byrne and Fielding-Barnsley (1989) conducted a study to determine the conditions that will lead to the acquisition of the alphabetic principle. Two experiments were done. The first experiment included 20 children with a mean age of 58.8 months who were screened to include only those without letter name or sound knowledge of the critical letters. The first day the students were taught to associate a pair of symbols with a particular spoken word. This was built upon until they were able to transfer information from one pair of symbols to another. On the second day, the subjects who were able to do this learned a new set of symbols for nonsense words. On the third day, the symbols were used for real words such as "bat" and "fat". Most of the children made no mistakes, indicating that, with instruction, they were able to perform speech-symbol associations.

The second experiment involved twelve preschoolers being taught to speak in segmentation and evolving to letter-sound training in a way similar to the first experiment. The results indicate that knowledge of sound-symbol relationship does not ensure sufficient insight into the alphabet without the phonemic awareness abilities.

Another study by Ehri , this time with Wilce, (1987) looks at the effect of spelling on reading. In this study, one group of kindergartners was taught phonetic spelling (phonetic-cue) and the other group was given letter-sound training. Test results indicated that those students who had spelling training read the words more effectively that the ones who had only letter-sound training. Misreadings were also examined and show that those who were spelling trained made significantly more pausible responses than the control group. Ehri concludes that learning to spell enables the children to process phonetic cues in the words, contributing to the ability to read.

Many researchers have looked into acquisition of the alphabetic principle through children's invented spellings. McIntyre and Freppon (1994) studied how six children developed alphabetic knowledge in two different types of instructional settings over a two year period. The two types of instruction are whole language and skills-based. Data collected show that all subjects had learned alphabetic concepts, however at different rates of proficiency acquisition. The main differences were in what the children used this knowledge for. Children in the whole language classroom used it more for reading and writing, whereas the skills-based children used it mostly for decoding isolated words or individual words within sentences.

The study noted the following developmental progression, regardless of instructional style: first the children acquired a sense of alliteration, rhyme and rhythm, then soon after, associated sounds with symbols. All of the children spent time experimenting with

sound-symbol relationships and "began to read in an emergent way". (p 413) Children showed metacognitive understanding and focused on word identification for a while before they were able to use the alphabetic understanding with some help.

Jonathan Baron (1973) undertook a study, questioning whether direct visual analysis can be as effective as phonemic analysis for word recognition, hypothesizing that phonemic code would be the quickest way to word identification. The experimenter asked subjects if certain phrases, some of which were nonsense, make sense. This requires subjects to gain exact meaning from the phrase the way it is necessary in regular reading. Mean reaction times were compared between two sets of phrases and geared to indicate whether visual or phonetic code was used for identification. Results showed that subjects did not show less reaction time when using phonetic cues to help decipher a word in this study, disproving Baron's hypothesis.

. Backman, Bruck, Herbert and Seidenberg (1984) looked into the acquisition and use of children's letter-sound knowledge. Examining three groups of average reading ability children from second through fourth grade and two groups of poor readers in third and fourth grade, Backman, et al, administered word lists designed to determine how the subjects approached word recognition. Based on the test results, they concluded that students may read high frequency words using only visual stimuli but appeared to initially approach words by phonological means. Poor readers do not know the spelling-sound correspondences as well as good readers.

Younger and poor readers rely more on phonological information in initial word decoding.

Connie Juel (1988) asked the following questions for her study of minority, low socioeconomic children in one elementary school: Do children who are poor readers continue to be poor readers and do poor writers continue to be poor writers? What skills are missing? Following these children through fourth grade, subjects were tested and interviewed periodically for phonemic awareness, decoding, word recognition, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, home reading, placement, attitude toward reading, IQ, spelling and writing. Results showed that poor readers in first grade are still poor readers in fourth grade and a majority of good readers in first grade are good readers in fourth grade. There was a higher correlation between early reading skills and later reading skills than between early writing skills and later writing skills. Poor readers entered first grade with poor phonemic awareness skills. Spelling had more impact on writing in first grade writing than on fourth grade writing.

As can be seen in the previous study, phonemic awareness is very important to the success of readers. Due to this importance, Hallie Yopp (1995) has created a tool for assessing phonemic awareness. Here she discusses the study that culminated in the creation of this test in 1988. In order to compare phonemic awareness testing vehicles and to determine the reliability and validity of each, results of ten different tests were compared and scored for reliability. Almost 100 kindergartners from three different southern California schools were tested, using ten phonemic

awareness tests. The Yopp-Singer test was rated high for both, indicating that it can be used to identify children early with possible problems in reading and spelling so that intervention can be made. She feels that without phonemic awareness, children will have difficulty making sense of the alphabetic principle.

Castle, Riach and Nicholson (1994) replicated findings of other preschool studies to see if early phonologic training would improve children's start in reading and spelling. In the first experiment, fifteen children were trained in phonemic awareness skills and fifteen children were taught process writing, which encourages invented spellings. Subjects were tested in phonemic awareness, two types of spelling tests and a dictation test.

In the second experiment, fifty one students in five schools were divided into three groups. The first group was trained in phoneme analysis, the second in semantic categorization, and the third group in letter recognition and did story writing. These three groups were also tested, as in experiment one. Overall results indicate that enabling children to use letter-sound correspondences, i.e.. invented spellings, gets students off to a better start in reading and spelling.

Ball and Blachman (1991) also find that early phonemic awareness is valuable. They split ninety kindergarten students into three groups. Group one was taught phoneme awareness, while group two was only taught letter names and sounds. Group three was not taught any additional skills. Results of testing showed that subjects received significantly better scores on letter-sound knowledge and segmentation for the group that was given phonemic

awareness training, indicating that phoneme awareness training may have a more immediate effect on reading than letter-sound knowledge.

The importance of phoneme awareness training is also found by Tangel and Blachman (1992), in a study comparing the invented spellings of children who were taught phoneme awareness in kindergarten with those who were not, tested students from 18 all day kindergartens in comparable inner city schools. A scoring system was created for comparison. Results showed that the children with the phonemic awareness instruction did score significantly better than the control group.

Mann, Tobin and Wilson (1987) used a similar approach to measuring student's phonological awareness: through invented spellings. They looked at the invented spellings of twenty-nine kindergarten aged children to determine if they could use them as an efficient and effective method predicting reading skill. Two experiments were conducted to investigate this. In the first experiment, Mann et al found that spelling test results midway through kindergarten can predict reading ability in first grade and that there appears to be a correlation between skills that support aural comprehension and those that affect invented spellings. They suggest that speech processing skills and phonological awareness are interrelated. The results of the spelling test indicated that invented spelling could possibly be used to be a predictor of future ability in reading.

Sulzby, Barnhart and Heishima (1989) sought to use children's rereading of their own emergent writing to understand the

forms of writing and how writing develops. To accomplish this, data was collected from 123 kindergartners. Although they found that they had much to understand about the development of kindergarten writing and rereading, there emerged several insights. Low level writing forms were used at the beginning of and well into the year, changing slowly. The amount of children using invented spelling by the end of the year was not "overwhelming". The persistence of scribbling did not indicate lack of growth, as evidenced by the children's rereading. Rereading of invented spellings in early stages showed that the decoding did not match the encoding.

Several other researchers have tried to examine children's early writing and to categorize it or to assign stages or levels of development to it. Manning, Manning and Hughes (1987) looked at what children write in their journals in first grade, given no topic. Subjects consisted of the students in Jackie Hughes' first grade class. These children were asked to write on any topic of their choice during the half hour per day allotted throughout the school year. Student responses were analyzed. Manning, et al, found that there were ten categories: *pictures only, scribble or random letters, labels or descriptions of pictures, lists, copies of text, personal content, informational content, and other written forms such as puzzles.* Additionally, the subjects were all able to write in journals, gaining confidence in, and enjoying, their ability to write.

Kintisch (1986) tried to identify the stages of journal writing in elementary school, after a four year study in a girl's elementary school. Teachers observed and recorded the following patterns. The

stages are somewhat overlapping. In prekindergarten and kindergarten, the stages include repetition, where the child may draw the same thing for a period of days, and illustrations which may or may not relate to the story. Kindergarten and first grade stages feature independent writing, rather than dictation to an adult writer, camaraderie in writing, titles and chapters and themes. In first and second grade, students begin to show concern about spelling. By second and third grade story length increases, there is more variety of style, and dialogue begins to emerge. In third and fourth grades, illustration diminishes, children may copy a favorite story or poem, and plays may be written.

Marjorie Hipple (1985) attempted, not only to identify writing stages, but also journal content in kindergarten. She used twenty-three non-reading children with whom she worked. Six stages of development were isolated: *nonwriting, scribbling, random lettering, labeling and listing, invented spellings, and transitional spelling*. Hipple identified the content categories as: *realism* (writing real events), *fantasy and isolated concepts* (i.e.: a rainbow). Though content and language in the journals continued to increase predictably in sophistication and content during the year, what was not so predictable was the correlation between the writer's maturity and the complexity of the writing, nor was the development always linear. "They grew linguistically, gaining increasing mastery not only over writing but also over speaking, reading, and listening skills. (p 260)

Sulzby (1992) also attempts to follow the transition from emergent to conventional writing, but while looking at a variety of

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instructional settings, from her previous studies. Her findings concur with Hipple (1985). She states that, we now accept that children's early writings reflect understandings about writing, and "the idea of linear, discrete stages prior to the onset of conventional literacy is flawed; instead, children appear to be building a repertoire of understandings with sociolinguistic properties."(p 294) The use of computers in writing has been investigated in a more recent study by Sulzby and found that the different software that is used influences the forms of writing.

Diane DeFord (1980) examines the writing of two year through seven year olds in order to understand their writing development. Evidence suggests that learning to write follows much the same development as oral language. She found that the fifty children in the study "explored rules governing the concept of letters, word, sentences and forms of discourse."(p162) and concluded that children need opportunities to do this. DeFord lists the stages of development as: *scribbling, differentiation between drawing and writing, concepts of directionality, letters and letter-like shapes, combinations of letters and spaces (*may not show letter-sound correspondence*), writing known words and developing letter-sound correspondence, simple sentences with invented spelling, combining two or more sentences, control of punctuation and capitals, forms of discourse (*stories, letters, etc.*).*

Allen, Clark, Cook, Crane, Fallon, Hoffman, Jennings, and Sours (1989) studied kindergarten children's writing development in whole language classrooms and analyzed it in terms of how entry reading and writing levels affect development and what patterns of

writing growth are characteristic of young children. The stages of writing development established were: *drawing, prealphabetic, prephonemic, and four levels of phonemic*, the first being *invented spelling/beginning sounds*, the second, *ending sounds*, the third, *middle sounds*, and the fourth, *vowels*. The reading-writing relationships part of the study found no significant correlations between the reading knowledge that the children brought with them in the beginning of kindergarten and their writing growth.

In a discussion of a study in progress by Catherine Snow (1991), she discusses a home-school study in which she hopes to establish a correlation between the early development of decontextualized language and reading comprehension in middle grades. She presents a model showing the relationship between language and literacy. This identifies four areas of skills developed. During preschool, these are: conversational language skills, decontextualized oral language skills, print skills and emergent literacy skills. Snow feels that first and second graders' literacy skills will be strongly related to preschool print skills and that, in fourth and higher grades, it will be more related to oral decontextualized language.

Throughout these studies, we have seen evidence that reading and writing are interrelated processes. Writing seems to enhance the student's involvement with print in several ways. Since it focuses the writer's attention on the individual units of sound that make up words, the writer begins to make sense of the alphabetic code. Writing helps the writer to organize information that he learns

in order to respond to it, which may be done through writing such as note taking or literature response journals.

Phonemeic awareness has been shown to be an important and significant predictor of reading achievement, and, since journal writing helps to focus the student's attention to written language, it appears to be beneficial to have considerable opportunity to practice that skill. Invented spellings are excellent examples of how children practice phonemic awareness. Not only does it provide interaction with letter-sound relationships, but it can aid the instructor in monitoring and assessing student progress, thereby alerting the teacher of a possible need for remediation.

Kindergarten students are able to respond to literature, clarify thoughts and reinforce language skills, required for reading, through journals. Their journals show specific stages of development as they grow in their ability to make sense of written language.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

TEST SCORES

TEST I - BEGINNING CONSONANTS

CONTROL	EXPERIMENTAL
1	4
3	6
5	7
6	8
7	8
8	9
8	9
9	9
10	10
10	10
11	10
11	10
11	10
11	11
11	11
12	11
12	11
13	11
	12
	12

APPENDIX B

TEST SCORES

TEST II - LETTER SOUNDS

CONTROL	EXPERIMENTAL
4	4
5	6
8	6
9	11
10	12
10	12
11	13
11	14
12	14
13	14
13	14
14	14
16	15
16	15
16	15
16	16
16	16
16	16
	16
	16

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